

July 2016



THE GRAPEVINE

Columbia County Master Gardener Program
505 N. Columbia River Hwy, St. Helens OR 97051
T: 503-397-3462

dreamstime.com

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/columbia/master-gardener-volunteer-program>

It has been decided to have a newsletter dedicated to just our membership/organization. This newsletter will be published once a month and will be edited by the President of the Columbia County Master Gardener's Association. Please send any news items, pictures, etc. to Chuck Petersen @ chpete@opusnet.com by the 1st of every month.

The President's Corner

The County Fair is rapidly approaching and we still need volunteers to staff the Demo Garden. Please contact LaVina Patterson or myself if you can give us some of your time. We need people all days of the Fair from Wednesday, July 22 through Sunday. The hours we are trying to staff the Garden are 10:00 AM until 8:00 PM Wednesday through Saturday and 10:00 AM til 2:00 PM on Sunday. The shifts are from 10:00 AM til 2:00 PM, 2:00 PM til 6:00 PM and 6:00 PM till 8:00 PM. If you volunteer you get a free pass to into the Fair as well as parking so you can get in and park for free. See the Fair before or after your shift and enjoy the atmosphere without having to pay. If you want to help but cannot swing a full shift please contact LaVina and she can see if she has a spot that will fit for you.

Well it appears the CCMG Picnic is back on. Brian and Crystal Abel have volunteered to take on the project. Thank you very much for helping out.

A while back I asked if there was any interest in dressing up a bike to represent our County at the International Master Gardener Association meeting in 2017. LaVina Patterson,



Upcoming Events

MONDAYS:

Demo Garden work on Mondays, 10 am to Noon

July 4

OSU Extension office closed

July 7

Demo Garden & Project Mtg 10 am

July 7

Board Mtg 10:30 am

July 20

Columbia County Fair

CCMG Board of Directors

- Chuck Petersen, President
- Wes Bevans, Past President
- Linda Bainbridge, Vice President
- Angela Sorensen, Secretary
- Kathy Johnson, Treasurer
- Lavina Patterson, Historian
- Pat LaPointe, OMGA Rep
- Wes Bevans, OMGA Alt. Rep

Linda Bainbridge, Peggy Crisp and Lynne Pettit have volunteered and I have volunteered a tired old bike for them to work on.

I have received several suggestions for the awards so far and they are excellent. Remember if you think there is someone who should be recognized please let me know. If they are not on the list I will add them to it.

Until next month

--Chuck Petersen, CCMGA President

Garden of Weed'in

We named our garden—Scappoose Senior Center Garden of Weed'in. Early this spring we planted brassica and lettuce starts. Everything looked great for about two months then we watched as many of our vegetables flowered in the on and off heat, favoring bees more than people. We have been making more improvements. We have a new shed for tools and gas powered equipment and LeRoy is installing a sink so we can wash our produce before sending it to the kitchen. The cooks are singing our praises. We are training beans, picking berries, and Weed'in corn that didn't quite make it to knee high in time to celebrate our independence. To date we have sent out 64 pounds of produce, most of it leafy greens.

--Deb Brimacombe

From Garden to Table

Of Cabbages and Kings

*"The time has come," the Walrus said, "To talk of many things:
Of shoes -- and ships -- and sealing wax -- Of cabbages -- and kings --
And why the sea is boiling hot -- And whether pigs have wings."
Lewis Carroll*

The deep snow from our early winter storm had finally melted away so I decided to take a walk through the vegetable garden to see what had survived the tempest. Nothing appeared; everything had turned to slime! A second look proved more fruitful – a few collards, some upland cress and even a few leaves of lettuce and spinach. And then I saw them – cabbages, great heads of cabbages looming in the garden like Victor Hugo's Quasimodo hanging from the bell tower of the great Notre Dame cathedral.



If artichokes and radicchio reign as supreme monarchs of the vegetable patch then cabbages must surely be of stalwart peasant stock – sometimes praised, sometimes maligned. Cabbage was known to and praised by ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans for its medicinal properties (although this probably wasn't the head cabbage we know today). European aristocracy, however, from the Middle Ages to the 18th century turned up their noses at the mere mention of this lowly vegetable. In fact, the nobles of that time disdained all vegetables, leafy ones in particular, believing them to be responsible for ill health. Since many of the common vegetables of that day – cabbage, beans, onions and garlic – were attributed to the ability to produce wind, they were of the attitude that vegetables might be acceptable for commoners but certainly not for those in aristocratic circles.

Despite being snubbed by blue bloods, cabbage withstood the disparagement and remained a reliable staple of the poor playing a central role in their diets. Cabbage was devoured with great relish, especially during the cold winter months, as it was one of the few fresh staples available when the ground produced little else.

Historians disagree as to the origin of the head cabbage we know today but do agree that heads of cabbage started forming about the 1st century BCE. Some believe it to have originated in the Mediterranean cultivated from the wild mustard plant (wild cabbage, sea cabbage). Others say its evolution began in northern Europe selected from a wild perennial cabbage that still grows along the coast of England today. Some speculate that the cabbage of ancient references was actually a kale similar to the Nero di Toscana (black palm, dinosaur kale) of today. Nevertheless, many varieties of heading cabbage were well known and widely cultivated in both northern and southern Europe by the 13th century taking a place of preference over its cousin kale.

The cabbage family (*Brassica oleracea*) sports a large family tree of cruciferous vegetables including kale, broccoli, collards, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and kohlrabi. Each has its own family branch or Group, heading cabbages belonging to the Capitata Group. Heading cabbages come in various shades of green as well as red and purple. Head shapes range from standard round to flattened to pointed. Most have smooth leaves but Savoy types have crinkly textured leaves.

Being a hardy cool-season crop, cabbage does best under uniform cool moist conditions and grows especially well in fertile soil. They're easy to grow and in our moderate climate a selection of cabbages is harvestable nearly year round. Just choose varieties that are best suited to each growing season from early spring through winter. Fertility requirements are relatively high and the timing of fertilizer application depends largely as to the time of year that cabbages are planted.

Cabbage can be direct sown or as a transplant. I have more success with transplants, starting the seeds in the greenhouse 6 to 8 weeks prior to transplanting. For the first spring planting I count back 8 to 10 weeks from the last projected frost, seeding the first starts in mid-February. Territorial Seed recommends sowing early maturing varieties from March through June and later autumn-maturing varieties from late May to early June, which allows heads to form during the relative cool of fall. When seedlings are 6-8 weeks old with 5-6 true leaves they are ready to harden off and transplant.*

Growing cabbage is not without its headaches especially when it comes to those nasty flea beetles and cabbage loopers. A sacrifice patch of arugula or turnips can divert the attention of the flea beetles but one of the best all-around prevention methods is the use of floating row cover (I should be their poster boy). When all else fails, I resort to using rotenone/pyrethrum for flea beetles and Bt for loopers, following package directions of course.

Harvest early cabbage promptly as they mature fast and burst quickly. Those later types that mature in late summer or autumn when growth rates are slow will often hold for several months. Over-mature heads are subject to splitting, especially if they are exposed to moisture fluctuations. One trick to help hold mature cabbage in the field is to give it a slight twist to sever some of the roots. The best rules of thumb though are to pick it when it's ready and to choose an appropriate cultivar for the season in which it is being grown. Cut the heads from the stems and include 2 or 3 wrapper leaves to protect against bruising.

From a nutritional standpoint, cabbage is jam packed with vitamin C, fiber, iron, calcium and potassium as well as several B vitamins. It also contains significant amounts of

glutamines, an amino acid, which has inflammatory properties. In European folk medicine, cabbage leaves are used to treat acute inflammations. Keep in mind when cooking cabbage, the longer it is cooked the lower the nutritional value.

Cabbage may still be considered a plebian vegetable in some circles today but its culinary versatility goes well beyond the overcooked boiled cabbage that so many have reckoned with. A savory cabbage soup will ward off the chill of the most bone chilling day. Red cabbage tossed with hot bacon dressing just until slightly wilted, garnished with bleu cheese and candied walnuts will evoke awes from even the most ardent of food snobs. Stir fry it lightly lacing it with Szechwan pepper and a splash of rice vinegar. Bake it with pork chops in cream lightly perfumed with fresh thyme and bay leaf. As a filling for tender dumplings, golden yeasty breads, or flaky strudel, cabbage acquires a new dimension. Transformed in any of these manners, the once lowly cabbage becomes a dish fit for a king. Admittedly, some of you may be thinking: "When pigs fly!"

--Robert Hammond, Columbia County Master Gardener™

*More in depth information regarding cabbage culture can be found in the spring and autumn catalogues of Territorial Seed Company or visit their website at www.territorialseed.com.

Columbia County Master Gardeners Association

Board Meeting Minutes

June 2, 2016

President Chuck Petersen, Presiding

Housekeeping:

- Secretary's Report – Approved
- Treasurer's Report – Approved
- Correspondence – nothing reported

Committee Reports:

- **CC Fairground Garden (Linda)** – still need people. Working on new bed. Trench is dug and working on laying blocks. Recommend posting duty list on shed so people know what needs to be done and can come on other days to help if they miss Monday.
- **Spring Fair (Kathy)** – Paid for rental items. 3 vendors have still not paid. Sent out collection letters. Reserved next years fair dates: April 28-29, 2017.
- **Rainier Food Bank Garden** – going well.
- **Seed to Supper Classes** – Very successful. In St Helens 8 out of 15 graduated and in Scappoose 10 out of 12 graduated.
- **Scappoose Garden** – off to a slow start. Need new shed.
- **Bug Group** – completed two school visits
- **MG Picnic** - still need someone to lead this or it will be cancelled.

Old Business:

- **OMGA** – Review & vote on the 3 budget options regarding the International Conference in 2017. The Board meeting took a vote and Option 3 (“pick & choose”) won. This option will allow the OMGA to support important projects with only a small loss.
- **Rainier Food Bank** - see above – we agree to give funds for the fence, and add this project as one that needs to give us a progress report.
- **Equipment Replacement Account** – we discussed moving the money that would have been spent on a laptop (\$800) and moving it into this new account. This is a restricted fund that does not affect budget

New Business:

- **Facebook Page** – Angela will look into this. Could be a valuable way to use “events” to advertise our activities.

Meeting adjourned @ 11:00 am
Respectfully submitted by Angela Sorensen, Secretary.